



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on October 17, 2011

Administration to Obstruct Climate FOIA Request

The Obama administration is conspiring with the scandal-ridden UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to cover up official correspondence and screen it from national transparency laws, according to breaking news from the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI). Writing for the climate website Watts Up With That?, CEI Senior Fellow Christopher Horner (left) announced his institute has today requested records from Obama's Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) that reveal a "backchannel 'cloud' established to hide IPCC deliberations from" Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. He stated that a federal inspector general confirmed that the correspondence is subject to FOIA.



"This 'cloud' serves as a dead-drop of sorts for discussions by U.S. government employees over the next report being produced by the scandal-plagued IPCC, which is funded with millions of U.S. taxpayer dollars," Horner declared. According to CEI, the plan involves creation of a secret "FOIA-free zone" by setting up non-governmental accounts for official business.

CEI maintains the "cloud" was premeditated. In 2009 shortly after taking office, President Obama appointed his [controversial science advisor](#) John Holdren as head of the OSTP and put him in charge of dealings with IPCC. At first, OSTP claimed its IPCC information was the property of the UN and therefore not subject to FOIA, but the Department of Commerce ruled it unlawful to withhold information on that basis. Horner reports the "plan to create a FOIA-free zone was then implemented."

He compared it to the infamous Bush White House e-mail controversy that emerged in 2007 and ended with dozens of convictions, resignations, and dismissals of government officials, lobbyists, and businessmen. At the time U.S. Representative Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) condemned their practice of using "nongovernmental accounts specifically to avoid creating a record of the communications." CEI [accuses](#) OSTP of similar methods "with vastly greater potential impact on the United States and its economy."

CEI's FOIA request includes demands for usernames and passwords of some authors and advisors involved in compiling the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5), due for publication in 2013. Horner says such details are necessary because of the many [outrages](#) that came to light after publication of IPCC's 2007 Fourth Assessment Report (AR4). These involved exposés of cherry-picked and fraudulently-reported data, bogus and speculative source information, and deliberate actions by IPCC authors to thwart FOIA requests after AR4 was released.

CEI says IPCC needs an FOIA shield because of "past embarrassment over releases of earlier communications," referring to the [Climategate](#) scandal of 2009. Pirated e-mails from Great Britain's University of East Anglia (UEA) exposed, among other things, lead AR4 authors deliberately plotting to



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obstruct FOIA. A sampling of quotes includes:

- "Mike, can you delete any e-mail you may have had with Keith re AR4? Keith will do likewise... Can you also email Gene and get him to do the same? ... We will be getting Caspar to do likewise."
- "I wouldn't tell anybody about the FOI Act in Britain. I don't think UEA really knows what's involved."
- "If FOIA does ever get used by anyone, there is also IPR [intellectual property rights] to consider as well. Data is covered by all the agreements we sign with people, so I will be hiding behind them."
- "I believe none of us should submit to these 'requests.'"

Horner points out that CEI's request deals with data, research, and reports funded by "increasingly skeptical taxpayers." He concludes, "CEI looks forward to the White House ceasing this unlawful activity and providing prompt access to the requested records so that U.S. taxpayers can know what they and the IPCC are doing behind the scenes."



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